

ART: FREDDIE GOESSLER



FEBRUARY 2011 ISSUE

CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH!

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Being that I am from New England I cannot begin this letter without mentioning how incredibly cold it is here. It is so cold that I want to knit a little hat to put on my nose so that as I write letters, while wearing gloves, my nose won't accidentally fall off. Anyhow, now that I've gotten that out of the way, I hope that this letter finds you as well as can be and full of the knowledge that there are *many* of us out here who have not forgotten you and are struggling for the day when we live in a world that does not solve our social problems with the idiocy of incarceration.

February, as I am sure you know, is Black History Month. When Black History Month originally started it was only a week and the intention was to bring to everyone's mind that too often the contributions of Black people are left out throughout the year. The intention of Black History week was not to tokenize the experiences of Black people and limit them to recognition only one time of the year, but rather point out that as a culture we value whiteness and the contributions of white people over those of Black people (and other people of color). Unfortunately even though Black History week first came about in 1926 we have not made the great progress we need to make as a nation or as a planet to eliminate the violence of racism and white supremacy. Black History Month, now, needs to be a reminder to all of us not only of the contributions of Black people to the beauty and strength of our world, but more importantly a reminder that the struggle against racism is far from over.

Writing about race, racism, and white supremacy as a white person is really important to me. I would not be the person I am today without the incredible contributions of radical people of color who fought in freedom struggles before me. I would also not be who I am without the anti-racist white folks who fought side-by-side with their comrades of color, seeking a collective liberation rooted in the possibility of a world based in love and justice. Inside the pages of this newsletter you will get to engage with the strength of each other's words as well as read the history of Black LGBT people who have been leaders in our struggle. I want each of you to look around your own prison/jail/detention center and think about how race is playing out where you are. If you are white, I want you to ask yourself what your role is combating racism that may be going on where you are. I remember when I was locked up in a county jail in Georgia and getting called a race traitor because I walked the yard with my bunky who was Black. There are risks when you start taking action and refuse to cooperate with the status quo. If you are a person of color, I hope you would look around at your institution and see which other groups of people of color there are that are fighting one another rather than recognizing that it is the prison system itself that everyone should be fighting. Are Black folks and Latino folks fighting each other, if so, what do you think can be done to deal with that? Black history month is a moment to think about our different roles in ending racism, ending these systems of domination that keep us separated from one another, unable to see that our division gives greater strength to the larger system that is continuously pushing us all down. Obviously the victory will not come in just one month, it's a life long struggle that I hope we can all agree to join in with together because we all suffer when oppression is able to continue and our humanity is far greater than the suffering we cause.

I know it takes us, those of us Black and *Pink* family members who are on the outside, a while to write back quick enough to y'all on the inside, but we do love hearing from you. Let us know what you think about what you read. Let us know what is going on behind the walls. Keep us in the know so we can inform others and keep building our movement. Through out collective strength we will create another world because indeed, "once there were no prisons, that day will come again!"

In loving struggle,  
Jason

# Jimi wants to join our B&P community!

Hi, I'm a 25 year old bi-sexual male who is currently sitting in a 6X9 Ad-Seg cell. I have been in prison since the age of 13 and have been on Ad-Seg for 20 months. A fellow friend gave me your address and newsletter and said I should write you. So here I am. Since my incarceration, I have struggled with the administration over my mental stability and the continuous use of segregation with little results, except them physically harming me with pepper spray, electric shocks, restraint beds, and the constant verbal abuse of being called a faggot and denial of mental health treatment. That is the everyday world that I live in. My everyday struggles are a constant battle for me and they seem to never end. I am writing in hope of some support from some fellow LGBT with similar situations or just to help me through this time that I am doing. And I also want to support fellow LGBT who are in my situation or worse. I discovered at a very young age that I was attracted to both sexes and it never seemed weird to me, and I have remained strong in my bi-sexuality. I am hoping to become part of the Black & Pink community.

Sincerely,  
Bi-Sexual Jimi

## Daryl shares his faith journey

I pray this letter finds you well in health and spirit. My name is Daryl Hess and I'm a prisoner in Oklahoma. I am also Queer! I'm a new Believer, I confessed my sins, asked for forgiveness and gave my life to God! I am working my way through the Bible for the first time in my life, and I turned 30 on Oct. 16<sup>th</sup>. I have what I now believe is a powerful testimony and a prime example of God's love and why Jesus dies for me, rather than just a past full of sins.

I have struggled with my faith, thinking I wouldn't be accepted because I'm Queer, but I've overcome that. I'm doing a total of 56 years in prison, I may very well never get released. I have unwavering faith God has a plan for my life, I don't know what it is yet, but my heart, eyes, and ears are open. I hit rock bottom in 2007 with a major drug habit and armed robberies, yet I continued to live a negative life until recently.

I am now in protective custody. Because I'm queer, I was beaten and raped. It was a particularly vicious attack by several inmates, I am afraid next time I may be killed. I found myself counting my last minutes of life, strapped to a stretcher, and I prayed- first time since I was 8 or 9. I said, God, I've done a lot of things I'm sure you don't approve of, committed a lot of crimes, I doubt I'm going to heaven. But Lord, I'm sorry, please forgive me and be with me through my end. Well, God pulled me through. I haven't reached my end on this earth yet, and He's still with me!

Since that day, I've fully asked the Lord to be in my heart and accept me like I am. I'm hungry for scriptures and fellowship. I suffer from mental illness. I have trouble with concentration and have to try to get the meaning out of scriptures, and I'm not sure I'm getting it right. As I said, I'm on permanent protective custody, and because of that, I can't go to church services with other inmates. I'm on 24 hr lock-down. The chaplain comes through about every two weeks and hands out literature, but does not have time to fellowship with me, and he can only give me one magazine or pamphlet. I'm at a critical stage in my walk with God, and my faith and dedication is being tested.

Another inmate on protective custody gave me your information, and I prayed asking God should I reach out to someone or do you want me to bear this alone. I felt in my heart I should reach out, so here I am! I have faith God gave me your information for a reason, I think it's two fold. Maybe my story will be read by someone in a similar situation and they won't feel so alone, and I pray this will give them some hope. And I pray I will get what I need, an individual or family who has time, caring and compassion to correspond with me.

Respectfully,  
Daryl A. Hess; Lawton, Oklahoma  
*Welcome to the B&P family Daryl! We send you love, and now newsletters too!*

# Much Love and Respect from Mikee

I'd like to thank Black & Pink family for their love and support in assisting our GLBT people who are in prison to have a voice, and express their voice through art, poems, letters, etc. I also like to thank everyone in the system, Sisters and Boys for their art, poems, stories, which are beautiful! I myself have been in the newsletter, and I feel your pain (everyone)!

To anyone in the yard, do your thing but don't let no one bully you or get you down, try to stay positive!!! Try?! I'm in solitary confinement going on two years for attempted murder on another inmate (in the yard). I had a few dozen incidents with "homophobics." I've broken my bones, lost teeth, but always stayed on top!! I don't let no one bully me or cross me...This last incident two dudes attempted to move on me but I was packing too, so I ended being the attacker instead of the victim. It was my life or theirs...and you all know how it is in these yards Boys, Sisters, and Queens!?

I was 230 lbs then, now I'm about 180 in a one man cell (solitary). I recently caught more battery's on homophobics while on escorts and I'm due for a lil' longer stay! Yet, I'm not inspiring violence, but my message is Stay Up and Strong, Alive! Don't let no one get you down...Let them say whatever but never let them bash you!



Reed Miller has created a symbol, the bars with the hands in an upside down triangle, and I don't know about any of you, but as soon as I get out solitary the first thing I'll do is tattoo that symbol under my eye, like a teardrop, and if you have not realized the strength of that symbol, I have! So let me be the first to say I will get it...and I will! This is our movement, and if your heart is where mine is, I shall see you with that tattoo "under the eye," or other places!? ;)

Keep moving forward, even in "sad times," and if you feel lonely write to Black & Pink they will not forget you, and keep expressing your love, your voice, thoughts, art, poems, etc...I am here with you as well, we are all one. Love and support each other!

I also want to say do not let another homophobe abuse or gay bash a fellow GBLT in any yard and prison you might be in because that boy or girl is your people. If he or she ain't got a soup or commissary, show some love and care! I've seen a lot of injustices in these yards...Please give that helping hand! And if you see Mikee in the yard one day, best believe I will have your back and as long as I walk these yards you will not go down alone if that's the case. I send my love and deep respect to all GBLT and Gay Boy Gangsters in the system! Happy New Year!, bring in 2011 the best peaceful way you can....Strength! And Respect!...Keep the peace as much as you can!

-Mikee, gay boy gangster CA prisoner

## "A Dry Tear"

Silently a tear rolls down my face, it's destination unknown. I feel lost and inadequate at times. A burden for those that befriend me. More often than I let it be known, I am unhappy with myself. That is not to say that I don't love myself, for what I speak of is a totally different thing.

I have not obtained certain goals I set for myself. And I can't help but wonder if the way I went about them were wrong. More often than I like, I seldom get a second chance to "do it again." So I find myself wandering in the depths of "what if."

Silently a tear rolls down my cheek, leaving destruction in its wake. I am reminded of the pain I've brought to so many undeserving people. With remorse being nothing but a discarded weakness, I stepped on and over anyone that would lead me to what I wanted. My heart maintained its rhythmic beat, but it provided no warmth.

Tunnel vision led me to consider my dear loved ones as nothing more than hurdles and obstacles to be dealt with as one would deal with insects during the summer. Mercy became an afterthought that brought about a shrug of my shoulders, and an "Oh well." My satisfaction justified everything.

Silently a tear begins to roll. It's destination, the center of my soul. The actions of my past are now the miseries of my present.

By A.V. Owens

# All I could think about was her

I received my first issue of the newsletter, and I was delighted to read all the wonderful poems and stories that were written. I have decided to share with you my story and poems.

Society decides who should love who, and not us to love who we want. Love is not conditional on male or female, but, who the person is on the inside. Love allows "US" to wake every morning with a smile about who we are with. The emotional love we give to another is just that, it's "OUR" love to give.

Who should decide who we fall in love with? Not a co-worker, not a neighbor, not some politician in Washington or your home state. We fall in love because "OUR" heart says, "Go ahead." It is fear that stops most people from following their heart, and it's the hate that's directed towards "US" that stops some of "OUR" community members from falling in love. At the age of 15 I had my first of many experiences with a male. Let me make this perfectly clear, being bisexual, means I can love anyone! My heart does not care if you're a male, female, or transgender. It's who you are, that makes me who I am.

I was married for 16 years to a very smart, loving and passionate transgender woman. I fell in love with her because she was not only my best friend, but she was my soul mate. There was nothing anyone could say to me that could have ever stopped me from being with her. What she had on the inside was more important than the outside. That love I spoke about earlier, that was what we shared.

From the time I woke, until the time I came home, all I could think about was her. Every second of every minute, was about her. She was my queen, and together we rode through "OUR" kingdom. My family was very open to her, and loved her as well. I lost friends, and gained many from knowing her. If there was one thing I gained from loving her, it was looking at the world in a different way. I must say, making love to her was "Incredible!"

She passed away in 1999, which proved to be my worst day. I wanted to stop living, and be with her. I also know that she would want me to go on with my life, and find someone to fall in love with again. While I know this person will never be like her, that is why I would never try to change my mate. Being who we are, allows us to love another.

We all fear rejection, and it's normal. What is not normal is not facing your fears. You will never really know love until you allow yourself the chance to find, and fall in love. There is someone out there waiting for you, it's up to you to open that door. Now, I am ready to open the door. Who is on the other side? Are you willing to get to know me?

Love, Greg

## "House of Thieves"

When Love Beckoned, I followed  
Though the way was hard and steep  
So Angel wings enfolded me because Hidden Swords can wound so deep  
And when Love spoke, I believed...  
Though I was still asleep.

Love lifts then crucifies and through the truth it sees its own lies  
Because Dreams are only shattered when we begin to open our eyes...

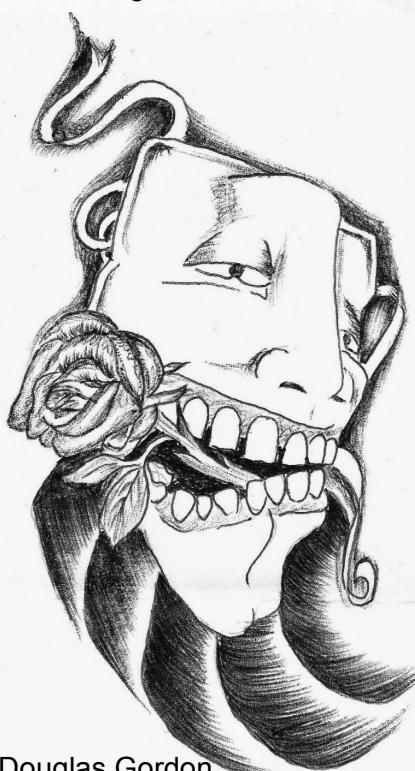
So run away like Hell to the House of Thieves  
Where Broken Toys inject their Hearts into tattooed covered sleeves...  
And listen to the Forgotten as they still struggle to Breathe.

I shall Laugh without the sounds of laughter  
I shall Weep but shed not a single tear  
I will Look and see nothing there after  
I will Listen but never hear...

Good Bye

By Hans Stephen Jenkins

-Douglas Gordon





February 7, 2011

GET EDUCATED! GET TESTED! GET INVOLVED! GET TREATED!

It Takes a Village to  
Fight HIV/AIDS!

WWW.BLACKAIDS DAY.ORG

## Information About HIV Transmission

From the Centers for Disease Control, NYS Dept. Health, and Safe Sex Guide for Gay Men

HIV can be detected in several fluids and tissue of a person living with HIV. It is important to understand however, that finding a small amount of HIV in a body fluid or tissue does not mean that HIV is transmitted by that body fluid or tissue. **Only specific fluids (blood, semen, vaginal secretions, and breast milk) from an HIV-infected person can transmit HIV. These specific fluids must come in contact with a mucous membrane or damaged tissue or be directly injected into the blood-stream (from a needle or syringe) for transmission to possibly occur.**

### SHARING WORKS and TATTOOS

Any time you share injection equipment with someone who has HIV or whose HIV status you do not know, there is a high risk that you will get HIV. Small amounts of blood from a person infected with HIV may stay in the needles, syringes, or drug works (spoons, bottle caps, and cotton) and can be injected into the bloodstream of the next person who uses the equipment. It is important to sterilize needles between tattoos, also.

**Rinse needles with water, then full-strength bleach, then water 3-5 more times.**

### SAFE SEX

Kissing (because saliva does not transmit HIV); Touching, massage, frottage (rubbing bodies against each other) and stroking are safe as there is no exchange of body fluids; Rimming (licking someone's ass or having your ass licked) is safe for HIV (the risk of HIV transmission increases if the person licking has cuts or sores around or in their mouth or throat); Mutual Masturbation (touching and rubbing another persons' cock) is safe for HIV. Fucking with condoms. Finger-fucking with no cuts / sores on fingers. However, using pre-cum or cum as a lubricant does present a risk for transmission.

### LOW-RISK SEX

Oral sex with dick: carries a small risk for HIV transmission, particularly if it involves getting cum in the mouth. Cumming in the other person's mouth increases the risk of passing on HIV if you are HIV positive. Taking cum in your mouth increases your risk if you are HIV negative, especially if you have any cuts, sores or infected gums. It's best to avoid eating rough or sharp foods, brushing your teeth or flossing immediately before oral sex.

Oral sex with vagina: Potentially, HIV can be transmitted through the exposure of a mucous membrane (in the mouth, for example), especially if the tissue is cut or torn, to vaginal secretions and menstrual blood.

Docking (rubbing the head of the dick underneath the foreskin of another dick) carries a small risk for HIV transmission. If uncircumcised (uncut), the inner surface of the foreskin is susceptible to HIV transmission through exposure to pre-cum or cum. If circumcised (cut), pre-cum or cum can enter through the opening of the penis.

Generally speaking, the risk of HIV infection increases for the activities listed above if there are cuts or sores in the mouth or on the genitals.

### HIGH-RISK SEX

Anal sex without condoms presents the greatest risk for transmission of HIV. If you are the receptive partner (the one being fucked), infected cum or pre-cum can easily enter the bloodstream through the mucus lining of the ass or through tiny cuts or tears caused by friction. If you are the insertive partner (the one fucking), infected blood or mucus from the lining of the ass can enter the cock though tiny cuts in the skin or through the eye of the penis. Having a sexually transmissible infection (STI), including gonorrhoea, syphilis, chlamydia or herpes can increase the chances of HIV being passed on by up to 10 times.

Vaginal sex between a person with a vagina and a dick is the most common way the virus is transmitted in much of the world. The lining of the vagina can sometimes tear and possibly allow HIV to enter the body. HIV can also be directly absorbed through the mucous membranes that line the vagina and cervix. HIV can enter the body through the urethra (the opening at the tip of the penis) or through small cuts or open sores on the dick.

### HIV DETECTION

Most people who are infected with HIV will test positive within one month (97% of people within 3 months) of being infected. The period of time after infection, before the HIV test turns positive is called the window period. During the window period, a person with HIV infection can pass it to others, even if his or her HIV antibody test is negative. In fact, during this period, the person may have very high levels of the virus and be most likely to infect others.

# “Hope for Life's Journey”

Someday, I would like to see what's down every road  
 I would like to travel across every highway and byway  
 I would like to explore  
 Every mountain pass and every sandy train  
 I would like to follow  
 Every straight route and winding path  
 Someday  
 I would like to understand  
 From where all things are destined  
 Someday  
 Even though I am sure of my lesson-  
 That we are all hoping to find the same place-  
 I would like to take that time  
 To travel, explore, and follow,  
 So that I can really see and understand  
 What's down every road...

-Greg Berin

# “Like you do”

You lift my Spirits High  
 Your words are as soothing as the summer's sky  
 You're as perfect as a fresh cut rose  
 As our conversation builds our friendship grows

I once thought this type of friendship was an oblivion  
 Now I know it's as real as religion  
 Your touch is so lovely  
 I am so happy with you, I pray for this friendship to last an eternity

The seasons will only come and go  
 But our friendship will grow  
 Our bond is as solid as a brick  
 If you call I'll come running quick

We don't tell each other lies  
 And we lend each other a shoulder for our cries  
 You're the older half of me  
 You've been my eyes when I couldn't see

You're the medicine for my pains  
 You're my sunshine after the rains  
 I am always thinking about you  
 No one has ever made me feel like you do!

-Shaylanna

# “My heart's savior”

As I sit in this cold and lonely prison cell, I can't help feeling as if I am trapped in an eternally endless hell...

Looking at your photo, I feel as if you've filled this horrible void in my soul...

Remembering the horrible pain and sorrow of my past, you've made me feel like it's all finally going to be okay at long last...

So- I'll sit here with you in my heart, and cherish the time we have, even if we are physically apart!

-Billy John Radan AKA *Wolf BlueEagle*



-Homer Martinez

# Recognize the essential role LGBTQ Black people play in our movements and in our world! Read a few historical bios:



**Kuwasi Balagoon** was a defendant in the Panther 21 case in the late sixties, a member of the Black Liberation Army, and bisexual man and a part of the queer liberation movement. Captured and convicted of various crimes against the State, he spent much of the 1970s in prison, escaping twice. After each escape, he went underground and resumed BLA activity. He was captured in December 1981, charged with participating in an armoured truck expropriation in West Nyack, New York, on October 21 of that year, an action in which two police officers and a money courier were killed. Convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment, he died of AIDS-related illness on December 13, 1986.

(above text is from <http://www.blackaugust.com/content/kuwasi-text.htm>)

"We must never forget that Kuwasi's history was one of struggle, consistent struggle, and a frontline soldier who was always there. We must never forget that Kuwasi having freed himself from prison was captured trying to free another comrade and latter freed himself again. He stayed in the mist until he was captured again. His stance at trial was (that) he was a freedom fighter and everyday for the rest of his life he thought of freeing himself and fighting oppression. He wasn't a bloodthirsty sociopath but a warm caring human being who knew that armed resistance to racist terrorism was/ is a legitimate means of struggle. Kuwasi was a good soldier and comrade. He will be greatly missed.

Kuwasi taught us much in his life. Loyalty – commitment and bravery – his death should also be a lesson. We must purify ourselves, clean up our communities and find those things, which are good and teach them to people. We must also learn to care for each other otherwise we're doomed. In Kuwasi's death we must find new meaning, seek the right path."

~Nuh Washington



**Marsha P. Johnson** was a well known figure in queer culture in New York City during the 1960's to the 1990's. A self styled "Drag Queen" She was a friend to the homeless and the street people, always ready to give what she had to help out her sisters and brothers. She was a co-founder, with Sylvia Rivera, of Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries in the early 1970's and would have been president of the organization if she had not refused. She was the mother of S.T.A.R House along with Sylvia, getting together the food and clothing to help support the young queens living in the house on the lower East Side of New York.

Marsha always had a smile for everyone. Once when appearing in court the judge asked her "What does the "P" stand for?" She gave her customary response "Pay it No Mind" This phrase became one of her trademarks, along with the exotic hats she loved to wear. Marsha was one of the most beloved figures in New York queer community.

Marsha P. Johnson's body was found floating in the Hudson River off the West Village Piers in 1992. The police recorded her death as a suicide, but her friends such as Randy Wicker believe that she was a victim of a violent crime. Efforts to get the police to conduct a serious investigation were unsuccessful. Marsha P. Johnson had become one of the best known martyrs of the queer community. (above text is from <http://www.transyhouse.org/Marsha.htm>)



**Audre Lorde** described herself as "a black-lesbian feminist mother lover poet" (Black Literature Vol. 2). Claudia Tate says of Lorde that she "derives the impetus of her poetry's force, tone, and vision from her identity as a black woman who is both a radical feminist and an outspoken lesbian, and as a visionary of a better world. In stunning figurative language she outlines the progress of her unyielding struggle for the human rights of all people" (Women Writers at Work, p 113) She wrote about her anger toward racial oppression, and personal hardship. She wrote many essays about being a black woman in the feminist movement, including the compilations Sister Outsider and Uses of the Erotic. One of the most widely used quotes in the feminist movement today comes from the title of one essay in Sister Outsider entitled The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House.

"Lorde wrote of racism in the feminist movement, sexism among African Americans, and of lesbians and love. She not only wrote for herself, but for her children and women as well. She wrote for people who could read her, who would be able to hear what she had to say. She wrote for women who had no voice of their own. She particularly wrote for black women because she felt there were very few voices for black women out there. She wrote for the women terrified to speak because they are taught to respect fear more than themselves. Lorde wrote particularly for women of color in many countries. She was one of the founding members of Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, which published the works of women of color. She felt it was her responsibility to speak the truth with as much beauty and precision as possible. She felt her responsibility was in writing for and of women because there are many voices for men and not enough for women. Lorde died of liver cancer in 1992 at the age of 58. She was a talented woman who touched the lives of many through her writing, and her teachings will live on."

(above text is from [http://voices.cla.umn.edu/artistpages/lorde\\_audre.php](http://voices.cla.umn.edu/artistpages/lorde_audre.php))

## "The Anti-Exploits of Men Against Sexism" Part 4 / 5 continued from Jan. 2011 Issue

On Monday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, Reverend Rowe came to WSP for the first time and convened a special worship service which was attended by approximately 20 prisoners. In an interview with a counter-cultural paper after the service, he stressed that MCC's programs were open to all sexual orientations: "We are not about to imitate the bigoted exclusiveness so commonly evidenced by most churches to we who are gay... The service held at the 'Walls' bore this out for it was attended by not only our gay and bisexual brothers, but also others who feel deeply about the dignity of all humans."

On the 13<sup>th</sup> Rowe came in for a meeting with Men Against Sexism, but after two hours was asked to leave the chapel by the Protestant preacher Reverend Gerald Jacobson. In response to Jacobson's concerns, a guard advised Rowe: "You were cleared improperly. Your visit is now over."

Mead, a staunch Marxist-Leninist, included a steady expansion of rights as part of his interpretation of correct communism—economic rights as well as what he called "the standard bourgeois ones," like freedom of religion. He would fight for gays' right to worship with whom they please, and prepared with a clash with the Protestant preacher.

The following Sunday a prisoner ran up to Mead and exclaimed "*Jacobson's gonna give a sermon on the evils of homosexuality! He's attacking MCC!*" Mead called together runners and instructed them: "Tell everyone to attend the Protestant services, and to wear their Sunday best!" The runners went to every tier.

Mead entered the chapel to a delightful spectacle. Thirty-some queers filled the pews decked out in colorful drag. Thirty was a substantial number, as the church was primarily attended by an insignificant gaggle of protective custody cases and child molesters. Mead imagined that the presence of so many deviants would deter the preacher from his tirade, but Jacobson lit into it regardless: "There is a sacred bond between man and woman which is sanctified before the eyes of God in the act of marriage. Sexual contact outside of the sacred union between a man and a woman is a sin and..." Mead stood, interrupting, and proclaimed "You are persecuting gays and in doing so you are denying us our religious freedom and being un-Christian in your hostility to tolerance and diversity!" Other queers chimed in: "Yeah!" "Tell it!"

A few days after the incident Mead observed, 'Gays are holding their heads a little higher!' He took pride in the change. This campaign was part and parcel of politicized ideas on gayness Mead had been developing since the early '70s, when he began to conceive of male homosexuality as a means of confronting patriarchal oppression. Mead came out to himself concurrent with his conversion to communism; in creating an unorthodox line asserting the "correctness" of homosexuality, he was making an ideology with which he could comply. It also worked as a pick-up line with others in the political community. "Men need to look to one another to fulfill our emotional and sexual needs instead of continually draining women," Mead once asserted with conviction to Bruce Seidel, the man with whom he co-founded the Brigade. Seidel agreed, but the two were unable to fulfill one another's needs in this regard before Seidel was killed in the Brigade's first ill-fated attempt at bank robbery. In an interview with *The Oregonian* he contended gayness wasn't just about sexual preference, but promoting a desire to develop bonds of affection and understanding among fellow prisoners. "Here you're jammed together. You have to bind up to have buddies. There's a lot of love in here, but men don't give it expression."

To create a place for love, coercion and fear must first be vanquished. Initially MAS only counseled and comforted victims who had made their escape from their tormenters, but prompted by ravages inflicted on members' consciences, the organization soon assumed the role of saviors of the abused.

The group's first crisis came when a young inmate arrived at the institution and was promptly carried off to a cell and gang raped. The perpetrators then sold their victim to the inhabitants of a different cell. As the product was the whole person, not simply their services, the price—\$300—was significantly higher than a carton of cigarettes. Mead and company, for the first time, felt prepared to intervene. Using a combination of bluff and bluster, dumb luck and moral persuasion, they extracted the victim from his assailants.

Instead of winning the respect of other convicts, this move made MAS members pariahs. The young inmate was a convicted pedophile—the absolute lowest category in the pecking order. "*What are you doin'?*" one inmate demanded, infuriated. "How can you take the side of a *kiddie fucker* over stand-up cons?" "It's the principle," Mead insisted. "You can't buy and sell people, no matter who they are." But principles and moral suasion weren't particularly powerful with this crowd, which was accustomed to getting their pleasure at the cost of others'.

Once they had freed the inmate from sexual slavery, MAS needed to provide him with a safe cell so that he would not be abducted again; they encountered the same situation with others who came to them in flight from abusive relationships. The housing situation at the Washington State Penitentiary made this a difficult problem to solve. New inmates were assigned cells by the administration but could only stay in them for a few days before being ejected by the cell's "owner," a powerful prisoner resident. Housing was a black market commodity like drugs and sex: a bunk must be bought with contraband or, if the inmate was broke and inexperienced at other forms of hustling, sexual favors. And once one started putting out, a pimp would step in.

To disrupt this process MAS, inspired by the outside movement against domestic violence, established "safe cells," in which particularly vulnerable new inmates or refugees from pimps and dominators could reside. Supporters from Seattle's prisoners' rights and queer communities helped raise funds to pay for cells, which MAS bought from other prisoners.

*Continued on Page 9*

## Supreme Court Reaffirms Duty of Officials to Protect Prisoners from Rape and Retaliation!

In a decision released 1/24/11, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a lower court's ruling that officials who retaliated against a prisoner when she reported being raped by a prison staff member were immune from litigation. Speaking for the Court in *Ortiz v. Jordan*, Justice Ginsberg highlighted pre-existing law establishing that officials can be held liable for failing to protect an inmate who they know is at risk of harm.

Michelle Ortiz was raped on two consecutive nights by a prison official. She reported the first rape to case manager Paula Jordan, who did nothing to prevent the second rape. Ortiz reported the second rape and, in retaliation, prison investigator Rebecca Bright placed her in solitary confinement, shackled and handcuffed, without sufficient heat, clothing, or bedding. In a 1994 case (*Farmer v. Brennan*), the Supreme Court recognized the duty of officials to take reasonable measures to protect inmates who they know or should know are at risk of abuse.

Prior to trial, Bright and Jordan asked the court to dismiss the case, arguing that they should not be held responsible for the second rape or the punitive conditions imposed on Ortiz. The trial court rejected this argument and a full jury found Jordan and Bright guilty of violating Ortiz's constitutional rights. After the trial, the defendants did not raise the question of their immunity from the lawsuit with the judge -- as procedurally required if they wished to make that argument on appeal, which they did. Nonetheless, on appeal, the Sixth Circuit overturned the jury verdict, ruling that the defendants were not legally responsible. Today's Supreme Court reversed that decision, confirming that the defendants failed to follow court rules for appealing after a trial.

"This is a technical case, but an important one. Under the Prison Litigation Reform Act, inmates who bring civil rights cases must meet strict procedural rules that tend to be both unrealistic and confusing. Courts consistently hold inmates to these requirements," Rothstein said. "Ortiz was brave and capable enough to succeed in bringing her case to trial. Under those circumstances, it's unconscionable for a court to allow prison officials to ignore procedural rules that apply to them. The Supreme Court's ruling today is important in demanding prison staff accountability."

*From Just Detention International*

### "The Anti-Exploits of Men Against Sexism" Part 5 / 5 continued from Jan. 2011

*From Page 8.* MAS members met prisoners on "the chain"—the line from the bus to processing—and took aside the ones who seemed to meet the criteria of exploiters. They explained the situation to newcomers, and, if the person so desired, gave him a cell until he could be absorbed into the prison population from a position of greater security.

MAS met in the PJC's office until the PJC refused to back MAS in their campaign against recalcitrant rapists, at which point the queer men's organization stalked out into the cold.

Without housing MAS was forced to meet on the "breezeway," a roofed walk way lined with chain-link fencing between a cellblock and a mess hall. All the unemployed hung out there: it was where the institution's black market—clothing, drugs, sex—convened. One portion of the path was known as "Blood Alley" due to the violent disputes which constantly erupted there; blotches on the concrete and the prevalence of scars and mutilations among the alley's denizens served as reminders.

One island of beauty existed in the prison. It was "Lifers' Park," an emerald of manicured grass and carefully cultivated flowers controlled by the Lifers' Club. The Lifers' Club was run by a black ex-boxer named Tommy Thomas and his two white lieutenants. Thomas liked to have sexual relations with men and considered himself politically progressive: on one occasion he let it be known that he fancied himself the second coming of George Jackson. Mead didn't think so highly of him, but he did trust him enough to collaborate. As many MAS members were lifers anyway, MAS began meeting in the Lifers' Club. They invited in their own guests from outside the prison. For special visitors they were able to make use of a sound proof room with a bed in it in the downstairs of the Club's two storey building.

MAS members replaced officers in the Lifers' Club who were released to the streets or transferred to other institutions. Mead became Treasurer, and Atteberry, Harp, and LaRue were all on the organization's Executive Board. They were conscientious caretakers. They implemented a candy sales program which put money in the Club's coffers. Decisions on spending the proceeds were made democratically—members voted to buy a foosball and a pool table and made other improvements to the building and garden. They also initiated a letter writing campaign to legislators in which lifers expressed their desire for sentencing reform.

A gym and martial arts studio was established in the club. On one wall a life-size silhouette was painted which was used for kicking practice. Mead, unable to resist an opportunity to proselytize, wrote the letters "KKK" on the target's chest.

MAS was at its peak. Mead felt the organization had accomplished the goals he set out for it—the transformation of a rape culture. This shift at WSP percolated down through the lower security joints and the overall conditions in the state improved dramatically. Media coverage of the campaign was encouraging. The public attention it drew legitimized the organization and gave it bargaining power with the administration. MAS submitted a petition to the appropriate Deputy Superintendent requesting official sanction of its existence. If approved, MAS would become the first legal gay prisoners' organization in the country. In order to make the success of this petition more likely Mead handed over the presidency of the organization to another prisoner more palatable to the administration. He himself had a new priority: escape.

*Ed Mead founded Prison Legal News, which had its first issue in May 1990. "Prison Legal News is an independent 56-page monthly magazine that provides a cutting edge review and analysis of prisoner rights, court rulings and news about prison issues. Subscribe for \$12 worth of stamps! Prison Legal News, PO Box 2420, W. Brattleboro, VT 05303*

# Black & Pink drafts “Statement of Purpose”



Dorsey, Alex, Libby, Ian, Mahsa and Reed shiver together!

In a chilly cabin in Saugus, MA over Martin Luther King Jr. weekend, Jason and Black and Pink leaders spent the day reflecting and planning. We drafted this statement of purpose, and would love your feedback!

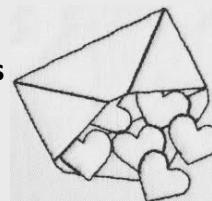
Write: Black and Pink– Developing Leadership

Note\* we know that “LGBTQ” does not reflect all of the diverse identities of our family; we are struggling to find a better term and consider “LGBTQ” a placeholder.

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:** Black and Pink is an open family of LGBTQ\* prisoners and “free world” allies who support each other. Our work towards the abolition of the prison industrial complex is rooted in the experience of currently and formerly incarcerated people. We are outraged by the specific violence of the prison industrial complex against LGBTQ\* people and respond through advocacy, direct service, education and organizing.

Newsletter Subscriptions (start or stop )

**Black and Pink– Newsletter Subscriptions**



Newsletter Submissions

**Black and Pink– Newsletter Submissions**

Free “Outside” Pen-Pal Requests

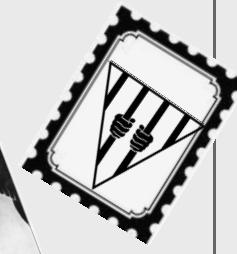
**Black and Pink– Pen Pal**

Free Prisoner 2 Prisoner Pen-Pal List

**Black and Pink– P2P List**

Ideas for Black & Pink and Statement of Purpose Feedback

**Black and Pink– Developing Leadership**



**Write to B&P!**

c/o Community Church of Boston  
565 Boylston Street  
Boston, MA 02116



**Write to B&P Art!**

\*\*\*New Address as of January 2011! \*\*\*

**Black & Pink Art c/o Reed Miller**  
200 Amory Street  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

**LEGAL:** Consider writing to Lambda Legal for support or referrals with legal issues that you are having. “Lambda Legal is a national organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men,

**SURVIVORS:** Just Detention International provides support for prisoners who are survivors of sexual abuse. Write them at the legal address below for a packet. Each packet includes an introductory letter, a list of local resources, fact sheets, publications about recovery from sexual abuse, and a letter of hope from another survivor. **Ms. Melissa Rothstein, Esq., 3325 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 340, Los Angeles, CA 90010**

## Thank you for your holiday wishes!

We received many Holiday Wishes over the past few months from individuals wanting to express their gratitude to everyone in the Black & Pink family. We may not all be able to celebrate with the families we were born into, but we sure can celebrate with our Black & Pink family! Thank you so much for taking time, effort and resources to share your thanks and warm wishes with us!